II. Looking back: 2010-2015 review cycle of the Treaty

5. The first sessions of the preparatory committee for a review conference are traditionally appropriate opportunities to reflect on previous review cycles. Addressing the drawbacks and shortcomings of past cycles is a necessary, if not compulsory, exercise aimed at avoiding similar unfavourable outcomes in the future. It is imperative not only for avoiding future frustrations, but also for planning ahead and charting the way forward.

6. In its final document, the 2010 Review Conference had emphasized the importance of a process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and had endorsed practical steps that included the convening of a conference in 2012, to be attended by all States of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States, and also emphasized that the 2012 Conference should take as its terms of reference the 1995 resolution.

7. It is gravely disappointing and highly regrettable that, notwithstanding the commitment made in 2010 to convene the 2012 Conference, it was never held, under the pretext of baseless and unreasonable justifications. Consequently, commitments related to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East remain unfulfilled in the context of the Treaty.

8. Egypt had spared no effort to achieve a successful 2015 Review Conference and continued to strive towards consensus on a final outcome document. For five consecutive years, in the lead-up to the Review Conference, Egypt, with the support of the Arab Group, the Non-Aligned Movement and other regional groups, spared no effort to implement the 2010 action plan pertaining to the Middle East and engaged positively with efforts in this regard. This was strongly demonstrated by the full engagement of Egypt in informal meetings convened in Glion and Geneva. Notwithstanding such engagement in several informal consultative meetings, it was unfortunate that after extensive consultations and negotiations, the 2012 Conference was never held, in contravention of the 2010 final outcome document.

9. The Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement had presented working papers providing a simplified approach, laying out practical and detailed steps for the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The working papers presented pragmatic and realistic proposals. The elements of the working papers were drafted in accordance with the principles for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as adopted by the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission. Egypt had welcomed the efforts of and the ideas presented by the Russian Federation in its efforts to bridge differences.

10. It was deeply unfortunate that only three States parties (Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) opted to block the much-desired consensus during the 2015 Review Conference. By doing so, and by forfeiting the opportunity to reach to an agreeable outcome document, those three countries not only pushed the vision of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East farther away, but, equally important, blocked efforts to strengthen the Treaty regime itself across all its three pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As a result, not only were five valuable years spent strengthening the Treaty wasted, but the 1995 resolution on the Middle East

remained unfulfilled, in complete breach of the legal commitment and the understanding reached in 1995 on the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

III. Moving forward: 2017-2020 review cycle of the Treaty

11. Egypt is of the view that the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East must remain a central topic in the 2017-2020 review cycle of the Treaty, not only on the basis of its political and security merits, but, more important, because the 1995 resolution on the Middle East was an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference on the basis of which the Treaty was indefinitely extended.

12. In this regard, Egypt stresses the special responsibility of the three co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East (the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States) to implement it. We believe that the co-sponsors have a special duty and responsibility to present their ideas and chart the way forward to implement the resolution. We expect that the co-sponsors will present practical and constructive proposals aimed at its implementation with immediate effect. Against the backdrop of the unsuccessful experience of the past review cycle, and as we embark on a new one, the introduction of new and alternative approaches and mechanisms to achieve the prompt implementation of the resolution becomes necessary. Any further delay by the co-sponsors in the implementation of the resolution could lead, once again, to an unfavourable outcome of the next Review Conference.

13. Egypt stresses the urgency and importance of the early realization of universal adherence to the Treaty. We recall that the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences reaffirmed the importance of the accession of Israel to the Treaty, and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Regrettably, no progress has been achieved so far in this regard. Notwithstanding the collective adherence by every State in the region to the Treaty, Israel remains the only country that refuses to adhere to it. At a time when the international community is working diligently to address other regional non-proliferation cases, it is essential that issues related to non-proliferation be addressed comprehensively, without selectivity.

14. Accordingly, the 2017-2020 review cycle of the Treaty should demand that Israel accede to the Treaty without any precondition or further delay as a non-nuclear-weapon State, place all its nuclear facilities promptly under the IAEA full-scope safeguards and conduct all its nuclear-related activities in full conformity with the non-proliferation regime, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty.

15. Notwithstanding the unfortunate outcome of the previous Treaty review cycle, Egypt is engaging the new cycle with a forward-looking approach. It is imperative that we overcome the failure of the 2015 Review Conference and ensure a positive and constructive start of the new cycle.